DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 024 976 CG 003 140

By- Lynch, Thomas H.; And Others
The Selective Effects of Different Pre-Enrollment Counseling Programs on Entering Freshmen.
American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C.
Pub Date Apr 68
Note- 26p.; A program given at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention, Detroit, Michigan, April 7-11, 1968.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.40
Descriptors- *College Freshmen, *Counseling Programs, Self Concept, *Self Evaluation, *Student Attitudes, Testing, *Urban Universities, Urban Youth

Two papers, presented at the 1968 American Personnel and Guidance Association Meeting, indicated that pre-enrollment counseling programs at urban state universities have thus far been unable to reach the many entering students who are not emotionally committed to college achievement. Accompanying flow charts showed limited results with three different approaches to pre-enrollment counseling techniques, while indicating that the more information disseminated prior to enrollment, the less interest there was express in counseling. The reports added that although students do recognize their academic shortcomings, many do not care to voice their concerns. Women tend to be more realistic in their self-perceptions than do men in this age group. While no solutions were offered, suggestions were made that universities bring enrollment procedures into step with the more open admissions policies they now follow. A discussion and critique of the papers is included. (CJ)

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN--MILWAUKEE

The Selective Effects of Different Pre-Enrollment Counseling Programs on Entering Freshmen

A Program Given at the 1968 American Personnel and Guidance Association, Detroit, Michigan

Arden C. Eichsteadt, Chairman
Thomas H. Lynch, Presenter
Robert P. Montaba, Presenter
Lenore W. Harmon, Discussant
Pierce H. Kramer, Recorder

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED024976

Department of Student Counseling Report. Volume 1, No. 1.
July, 1968

CG 003 140

Contents of Program

1. Variation in Student Responsiveness to Different Approaches in Pre-Enrollment Counseling Programs. Thomas H. Lynch

2. Some Psychological Characteristics of Entering Freshmen that Influence Use of Counseling Services. Robert P. Montaba

3. Reaction to the Papers of Thomas Lynch and Robert Montaba. Lenore Harmon

4. Reply by Thomas H. Lynch.

5. Response to Commentary. Robert P. Montaba

ED024976

VARIATION IN STUDENT RESPONSIVENESS TO DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN PRE-ENROLLMENT COUNSELING PROGRAMS[1]

Thomas H. Lynch

University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee

Large State Universities, especially those with "open door" policies in urban settings, are being called upon to serve an increasingly larger segment of youth. There seems no doubt that the University in its present posture successfully provides a rich educational opportunity for many, if not most students. However, it is also obvious that the University is not providing the necessary and sufficient conditions for many other entering students who somehow do not survive the educational "opportunity" society now promises them. A "hidden" factor in academic survival in "open door" Universities is college-boundness, that is, a ready emotional acceptance of the University's authority and "goodness", or at least a readiness to endure long enough to learn survival techniques. In a word, a student must be able to "stomach" the University in order to graduate, and if he is not emotionally ready to do this from the first day of classes, his actual chances of graduating are reduced.

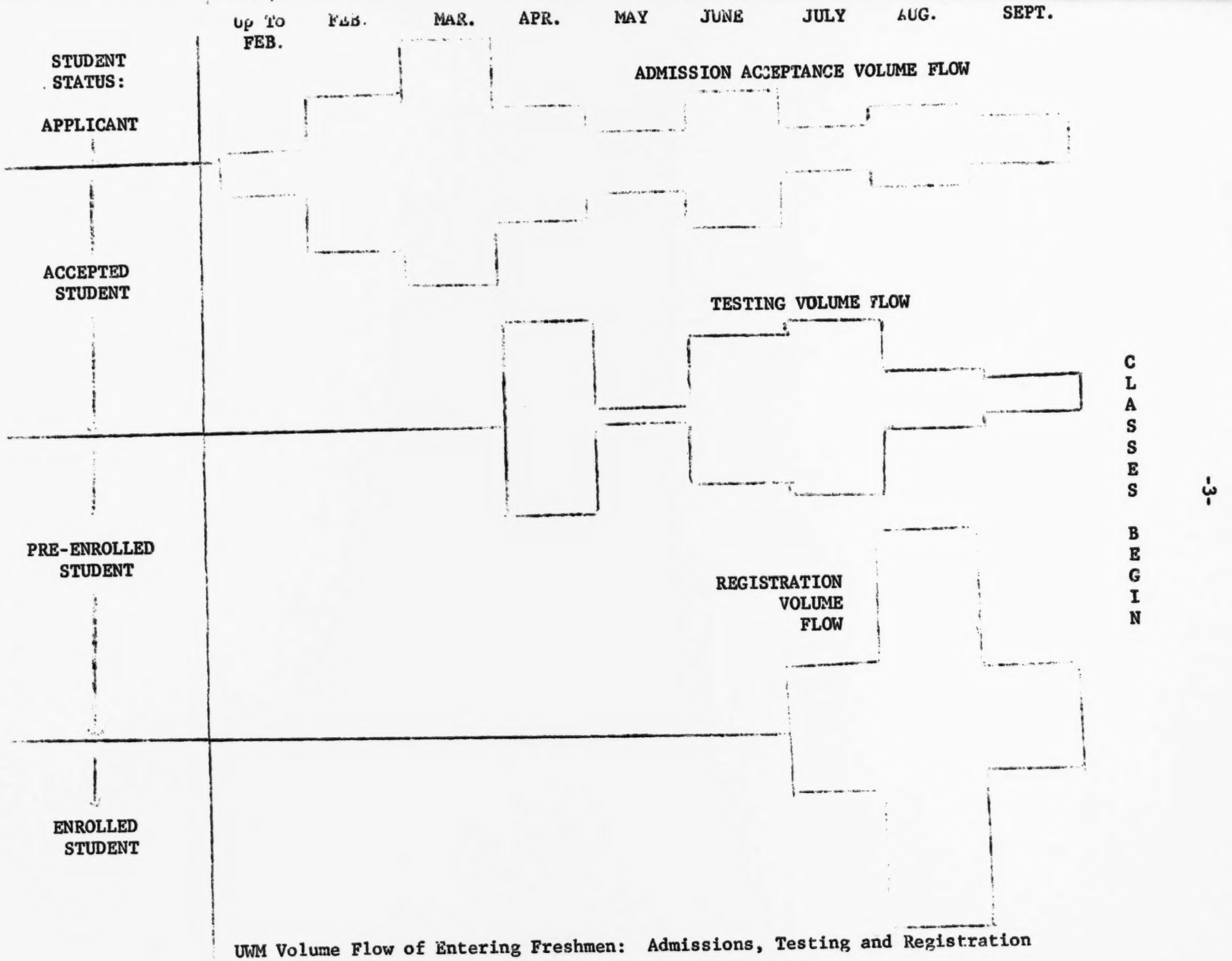
Our participation in pre-enrollment counseling programs for entering Freshmen at the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee (UWM) during the last five years has lead to an appreciation of the dilemma both the students and the University face. We have tried to help students get started "on the right foot" by offering counseling for unready students. However, we have found that in the pre-enrollment period students appear to be able to consider only informational aspects of their entering status. If their informational needs are responded to adequately outside of counseling, they simply will not come for counseling in any numbers proportional to the numbers we know are not ready.

[1] A paper presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention, Detroit, 1968

The Department of Student Counseling has conducted a Pre-Enrollment Counseling Program for entering Freshmen for many years. We have capitalized on the fact that most of our students come from the Milwaukee metropolitan area by spreading out the pre-enrollment procedures over a considerable length of time. Figure 1 portrays and defines how we have done this.

Figure one, a "volume-flow" chart, shows the opportunity we have for offering pre-enrollment counseling to entering Freshmen. UWM has a very typical before-classes-begin procedure: the student must first apply and be accepted, take counseling and placement tests, and then register with advisory help. A schedule of classes is made up, and the student goes to classes according to that schedule. The "Pre-Enrollment Period," as we define it, includes the time starting with testing and ending with registration. Like most State Universities, we accept students continuously from about a year in advance to right up to and extending into the first week of classes, although the bulk of students are accepted by June. UWM accepts enough students by March so that we can test 800-1000 students during Spring Recess. The Freshmen Registration Program starts late in July and lasts for about four weeks, during which time students are enrolled in groups of 200 or so on any one day. Therefore, those students who are tested in Spring Recess have a pre-enrollment period of about four months. (April to August). Those tested in June have about six weeks. Those tested late in July have three to four weeks. Those in mid-August may have only one or two days. And finally, we always seem to have 100-200 students who come for testing the week before classes begin. They are tested one day, enrolled the next. These really don't have a pre-enrollment period.

Now for our pre-enrollment counseling program and its variation over the last few years. Figure 2 displays the elements: 1) We have a basic premise, and 2) a way of communicating the appropriateness of pre-enrollment counseling along with how to arrange for it. Our premise for pre-enrollment counseling has been the same throughout, and is something like the following:



UWM Volume Flow of Entering Freshmen: Admissions, Testing and Registration

UWM expects an entering student to handle enrollment responsibilities, and the manner in which the student handles them may make a considerable difference in his success or lack of it in college. Specifically, the University expects the student:

a.) to have a tentative educational goal that will enable the University to supply him with an advisor for that goal.

b.) to know enough about his scholastic competence to make wise choices about the size of his first semester load.

Having pointed out this University expectation, we go on to indicate that pre-enrollment counseling can be helpful to the student in rising to meet these expectations if the student does not feel ready.

Note that the tune we thus pipe to entering Freshmen is harmonious with the melody expressed in their acceptance letter from Admissions. Traditionally, colleges assure or "express confidence" that admission to college means that the student is <u>emotionally</u> committed to doing everything he or she can to become a successful college student. The University assumes students are literally "college-bound" once they accept and come to classes. Thus, in this context, the counseling service need only make sure students see how we can be helpful and wait for students to take the initiative in setting up a pre-enrollment counseling appointment if they need it.

While our premise for pre-enrollment counseling has been the same over the five year period, our method of communicating it to the student and the procedure leading to a counseling appointment has varied.

In 1963 and 1964, students were informed orally at the end of testing that counseling was available. A brief oral message explained its possible usefulness. Students were told to call or come into our office if they wished to see a counselor.

In 1965 and 1966 we ran an extensive program of group presentation of test results. The availability of counseling was mentioned at the end of the

testing sessions, and a handout was given to the students informing them that our Department offered entering Freshman a program for presentation of test results. The handout stressed that the University felt that students needed to be aware of the nature of their scholastic competence if they were to make sound educational plans. Advisors would try to help, but the student himself would have to make many decisions in Registration. The handout specified a time, usually about two weeks after testing, that the student could come in for this group presentation. This turned out to be a fairly popular program with 1,505 students attending 19 such group presentations in 1965 and 1,297 students attending 8 such group presentations (in larger facilities) in 1966. If a student called in for counseling, he was asked if he had attended a group presentation of test results and encouraged to do so before coming for counseling if he had not.

The program lasted about 90 minutes. After the students were identified, seated, and welcomed, they were given their test profile reports. Handout materials explaining the intent and nature of the tests were distributed, read and commented on. The meaning of the scores was discussed in terms of their relation to college grades. A few case illustrations were given. A questionnaire was distributed to get reactions. The program culminated in pointing to the fact that they would soon be registering and that they needed to be ready for this. The differences between advising and counseling was mentioned and illustrated, so that we made it very explicit how counseling could help in getting ready for Registration. We had a receptionist stationed so that at the end of the program those students who wanted to make a counseling appointment could do so right on the spot

In 1967 we used a Booklet as our means of communicating the appropriateness of our services. The Booklet, 45 pages in length, was entitled "You Can Start on the Right Foot." The Booklet provided a detailed picture of the University and its procedures, along with a guide intended to help students select a tentative major. The University's Bulletin was explained along with a detailed index for finding relevant sections of the Bulletin. Finally, the nature of our Test Profile Report was explained, and a form provided so that a student could mail in a request

for a test report, which then was mailed to him. Throughout the Booklet counseling was offered as a way the student could get additional help if needed.

Now for our results. What percentage of entering freshman sought counseling under the three different types of pre-enrollment counseling programs? Figure 2 shows that in 1963 and 1964, 18.7% and 15.2%, respectively, of the students did so. In 1965 and 1966, 8.4% and 8.9% came in, while in 1967, only 1.9% came in. As we developed ways and means for students to get relevant information about the University and their test results without coming for counseling, the demand for counseling dropped. The number of students coming for pre-enrollment counseling has varied inversely with the amount of pre-enrollment information available outside of counseling.

We think this fact suggests there is something about the present nature of the University, including the University's method of enrolling students, that unwittingly makes it emotionally difficult for many entering students to come for counseling. We are quite sure, for example, that many more than 50 students could have benefitted from pre-enrollment counseling in 1967. Before expanding on this notion, however, another possibility should be considered. It is possible that our program modification somehow hid counseling from view. It could be that we so effectively directed attention to understanding the University that our special services were eclipsed. We have some evidence bearing on this possibility.

Figure 3 presents this evidence. Pre-enrollment Counseling Booklets were mailed to those tested in the Spring, 1967, and we divided those who resided in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area into two groups, which I will call Group I and Group II. We analyzed our testing data that we collected on these freshman, and the groups do not differ in respect to high school record or scholastic aptitude.

Group II were simply mailed the Booklet. Group I students were mailed the Booklet along with a questionnaire designed to increase the salience of the Department of Student Counseling. The Questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part I had 20 questions which allowed the student to rate the valuableness or

YEAR	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
PREMISE	SAME THROUGH OUT FIVE YEARS				
COMMUNICATION METHOD	ORAL ANNOUNCEMENT AT END OF TESTING		GROUP PRESENTATION OF TEST RESULTS		BOOKLET
NUMBER FRESHMAN TESTED	2158	2390	2885	2544	2609
COUNSELING APPOINTMENTS					
(a) NUMBER OF STUDENTS	402	351	241	226	50
(b)% OF THOSE TESTED:	18.7%	15.2%	8.4%	8.9%	1.9%

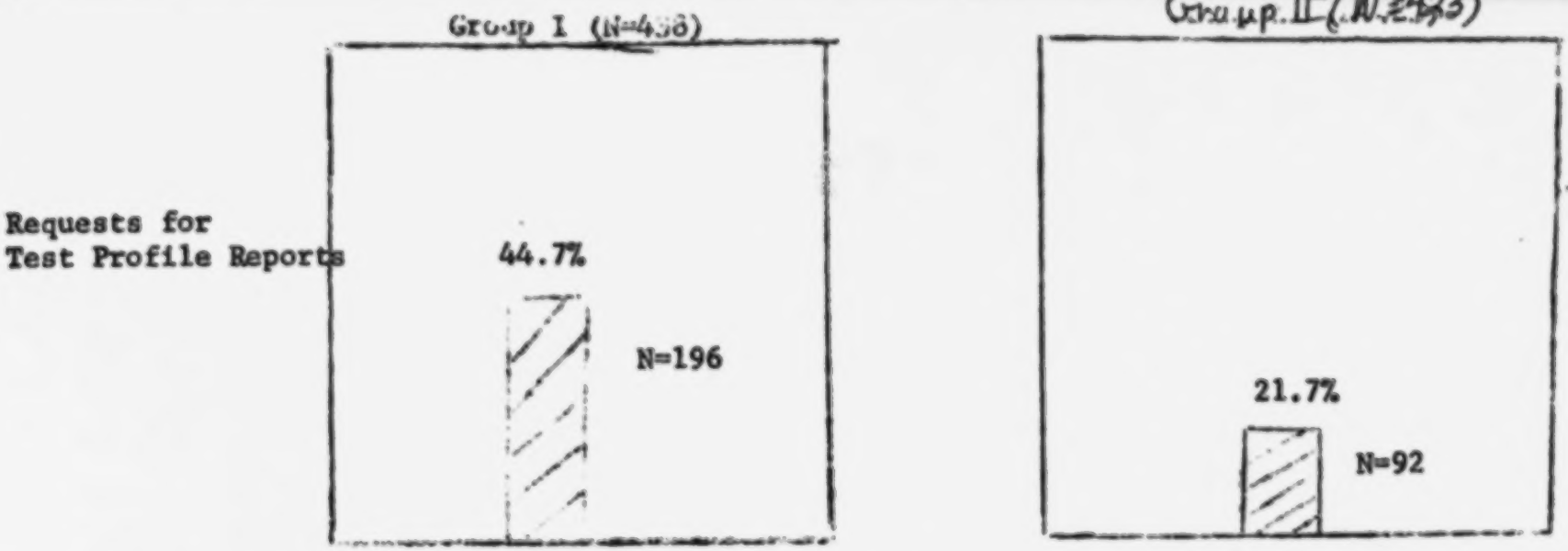
UWM Pre-Enrollment Counseling Programs 1963-1967

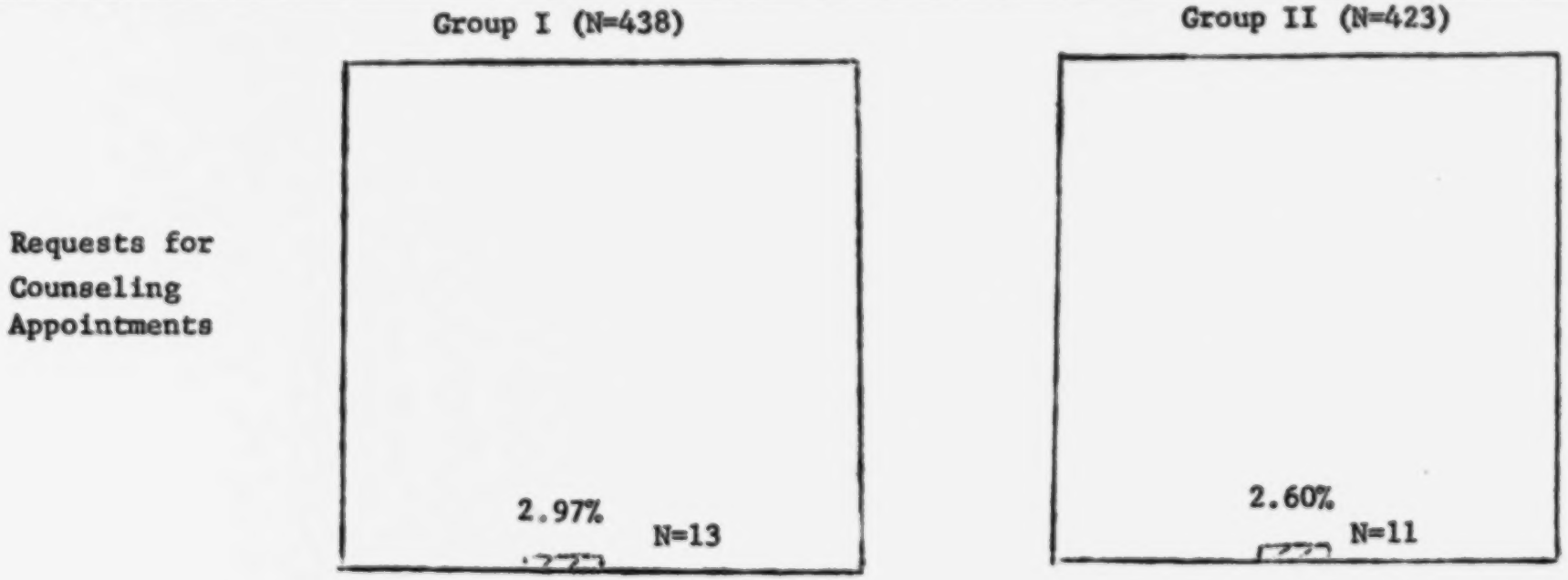
Figure 2

helpfulness of the various aspects of the booklet and asked the student questions concerning his readiness to register. Part II acknowledged that sometimes students have mixed or even negative feelings about going to college and then asked if the student himself felt this way. If so, he was asked 19 questions relevant to feelings and values associated with going to college. Part III inventoried what the student planned to do, if anything, about getting better prepared for registration and the coming year. Part IV consisted of a form a student could mail in with any question that he had, and we promised to reply in writing. We felt this Questionnaire would bring to the student's attention that a Department of Student Counseling not only existed but was concerned that students carefully consider their emotional readiness to go to college.

Figure 3 portrays that Group I students, who received Questionnaires, requested Test Profile Reports in much larger numbers than the Group II students: 44.7% against 21.7%. If the two groups are each subdivided into those who requested a Report and those who did not, the resultant 2 by 2 contingency table yields a chi-square = 61.2, corresponding to a probability value much smaller than .001. Therefore, it can be concluded that Group I responded differently, and we have inferred that the Questionnaire did communicate to those students who received them that our Department did indeed exist and was concerned about their scholastic readiness. Our inference, of course, can be challenged. For example, we also included an envelop which made it easier for Group I than Group II to mail in the request form, and perhaps an envelop alone would have boosted the request rate 100% for Group II. Even so, we could conclude that sending in and receiving a report would make our Department more salient for Group I than for Group II, regardless of <u>why</u> Group I did in fact respond twice as much as Group II.

Now for the important question all this leads to. Here we have two groups that have been provided, in the form of a booklet, nearly all the information they need for considering their readiness for registration. Further, one group's attention has been gained by the use of a questionnaire and envelop enclosure. We know from past experience that many of the students are not emotionally ready for





Pre-Enrollment Student Requests for Test Profile Reports and for Counseling Appointments

Figure 3

college, so that we might expect that we would get, say, double the number of students from Group I as compared to Group II to come in for counseling. However, the previous results, which indicate that pre-enrollment counseling appointments decline as information is provided in other ways, would caution such an expectation.

The lower half of Figure 3 gives the results: 13 out of the 438 students in Group I asked for counseling, while 11 out of the 423 students in Group II did so: 2.97% for Group I versus 2.60% for Group II. Not only are these percentages not different statistically, they are so low than even if they were different the result would be clear. That is, when less than 3% of students come in for counseling when we know from experience that easily 25% of them could profit from counseling, the conclusion seems inescapable. Something is suppressing the free use of counseling for these students, and it is not that students do not know of our existence.

Of course, we all know this is true. Many students who are headed towards failure cannot be presently reached, not only in the pre-enrollment period but also they have not been reached in high school or earlier. Our results suggest to us that what we have suspected all along is all too true, that is, the existing structure of the University is such that many emotionally unready students are forced to see themselves as "good students" and, once admitted, they cannot be expected to see otherwise until outright failure forces them to do so. Once they experience failure, some come for counseling and are helped. We know if they had come earlier we could have been more helpful, and we have tried to get them to come earlier, and we will continue to try. But we face a real dilemma. We cannot realistically expect students to use pre-enrollment counseling in the University as it is now constituted. We can dispense information, and we are so doing. But this is not counseling.

The "college-bound" student, the student who is emotionally bound and committed to getting through college, this sort of student <u>may</u> make good use of such information. But the college non-bound, those admitted but not fully emotionally committed, apparently are adopting a defensive posture so that such information

by itself, is at best useless for such students. Possibly it does some harm if it prematurely forces emotionally unready students to adopt a facade of readiness. They may gain only the perception that the University demeans unreadiness and thus to seek counseling for readiness is degrading. Or so we can speculate because our results point to some sort of suppression of student use of counseling.

Many other speculations could be based upon the foregoing account. I am aware that such observations should be given a proper foundation, and clearly our total program must be scanty in this regard because we have chosen to give you an outline of our experiences. In summary, then, our pre-enrollment counseling program results over the last five years are consistent with much commentary that suggests that Universities have not yet discovered how to be genuinely "open door" institutions. Until this openness is genuine, counseling services in the pre-enrollment period will not be fully utilized.

The second paper on our program supports this conclusion in reporting how the controlled variation in Counseling Department salience, described above, highlighted emotional-identity differences in requests for information.

SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENTERING FRESHMEN THAT INFLUENCE USE OF COUNSELING SERVICES[1]

Robert P. Montaba

University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee

It has been reported in a previous paper[2] that our counseling service had become so good at communicating pre-enrollment information that few entering students come in any more before registration. We were willing to concede that the new students felt ready to get on with it, but not that they felt secure in what they were getting into. So, we examined the test results to see if there were any differences between those who sought test information about themselves and those who didn't within the two original groups. Group I received the Booklet and the Questionnaire and had four response options--return the Questionnaire only, request test results only, return Questionnaire and request test results, or none of these. Group II received no Questionnaire and thus had only two response options--request test results or no response. We wanted to find out why some students would send for their test results and some wouldn't.

It should be emphasized that the University does not require the entering student to know his test results before enrolling, or at any other time. The Counseling Department has suggested it on the grounds that realistic self-knowledge can lead to better decisions. Requesting test results, then, has some very personal implications and comparing the results of those who did with those who didn't could provide clues to the self-perceptions of the two.

Three estimates of academic preparedness were used in the comparisons. They were the Total score of the College Qualification Test, rank in high school graduating class, and a self report of scholastic competence. The first of these covers the same areas as the ACT (verbal ability, numerical ability, science and social studies information), but it requires the recall of previously learned information. The high school rank represents percentile ranks without any adjustment for the calibre of the high school.

1. A paper presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention, Detroit, 1968
2. Mediation in Student Responsiveness To Different Approaches In Pre-Enrollment Counseling Programs.

The self report of scholastic competence requires simply a guess on the part of the student about how able he is compared to his fellow entering students in the areas of verbal skills, mathematics, reading ability, and study habits and attitudes. All of these data are converted to stanines based upon UWM norms and the comparisons which follow are in stanine units. The Academic Achievement score of the Strong Vocational Interest Blank was available for many of the sample so a comparison of those scores will be reported for what it is worth as an addition to the other data.

All of the comparisons are depicted on Figure 1, page 6. For the sake of discussion, the CQT score will be referred to as an estimate of ability, the high school rank as an estimate of achievement, and the self report data as perception.

In processing the data two things became clear very early. First, so few students requested test results only in Group I that they were incorporated with those who both returned Questionnaires and requested test results. Thus Group I is reported in only three response categories--Questionnaire only, test request, and no response. These are designated on the chart as Q, TPR, and NR respectively. Group II remains the same with TPR and NR categories. Second, we recognized that there was a sex bias in the two standard sources for academic prediction with men scoring significantly higher on the CQT and women scoring significantly higher on high school rank. The comparisons had to be further divided by sex.

Refer to the comparisons in Figure 1 and notice that the women score uniformly low on the ability scores and uniformly high on the achievement scores. For men, only the Group I-Q category has an ability score as low as that for women and only the Group I-TPR category scores in the women's range on achievement. We felt that the critical data would be the student's own perception of himself--the perception score. That is, if we made the Department of Student Counseling more salient, some students might feel threatened and might want to avoid their test results, They would respond with Questionnaire only or not at all.

The women's self estimate is very close to their high school achievement, but in each case significantly different from their ability scores. Notice that the perception score tends to vary with both the achievement and the ability scores.

But, the Q category has the highest perception estimate and is the only category in which it is the highest score, except for Group II-TPR which is virtually an identity between perception estimate and ability. The explanation of the score distributions for women may be that they are better attuned to the structure of education and know how to get along with it. Accordingly, the Group I-Q women apparently felt inclined to respond to our salience, but since they had such a high perception of themselves they didn't feel the need for test results. The Group I-TPR women responded in a similar fashion, but being a bit less sure of themselves took our suggestion to consider test results. The NR category probably consists of those who are confident of their ability to succeed in school but who, for some reason, didn't feel constrained to return the Questionnaire, and those with a low self perception in reaction to which they elected not to respond at all. The same inference can be made for the Group II women except that they had no questionnaire option. In other words, those who had the best perceptions of themselves and had it grounded in reality acted accordingly. Those who had realistic reservations about themselves reflected this in their perception scores and in their avoidance reaction

That seems to be a reasonable explanation, but how will we ever know? Some first semester outcomes for women are reported at the bottom of each category column. The percent of students in both groups who completed the semester as full time students and the percent of all students who earned less than a C (2.00) average shows that the Q category fared best and the NR category fared the worst for Group I. Also, Group I holds an edge over Group II in having a smaller percentage with less than a C average. These results are regarded as supporting the explanation. For women, then, there is not much evidence for the defensiveness we had predicted would occur.

The men seem to have responded differently to the situation. First of all they show much greater variability in both their ability and their achievement scores. Second, both ability and achievement scores are more similar than for women. And finally, perception scores are closer to ability scores but they are consistent over-estimates, the exception is in the TPR category of Group II. What is the explanation for this?

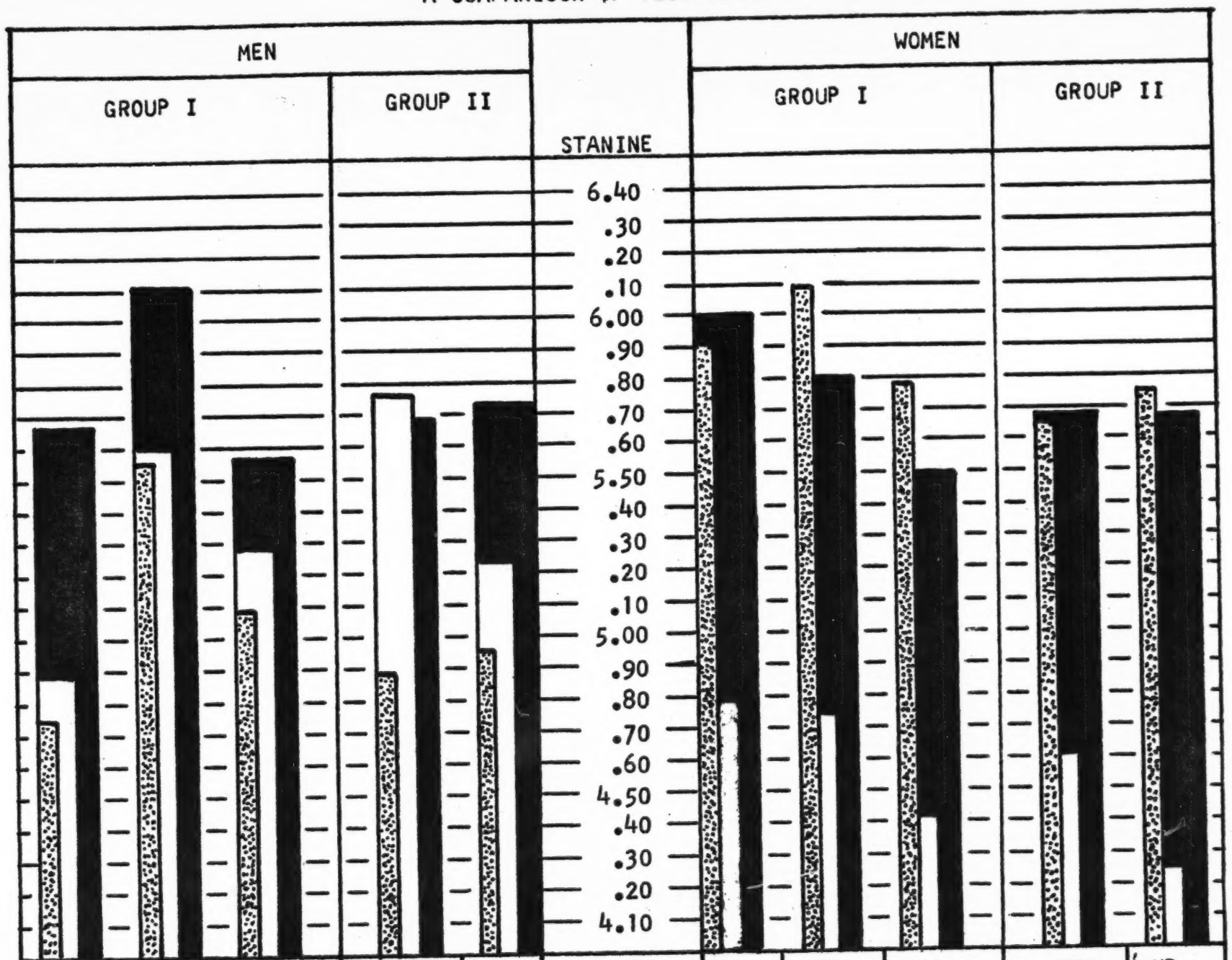
Certainly men do not have the history of successfully coping with the structure of education that women have. Consequently they would probably base their self perceptions on an estimate of ability other than their history of achievement in school. The distribution of their scores supports this notion. Yet, in denying experience as a valid criterion they have less explicit information to go on. That is, almost all of the students had taken either the ACT or the SAT prior to taking the UWM entrance test battery, but it is unlikely that they were able to use the report of the results as a clear conception to integrate into their self-concepts. This is more likely so when you consider that they already have been accepted by the University. Clearly all have taken an optimistic view of themselves as prospective college students. Among the Group I men, those in the TPR category felt the most confident and, indeed, had the most justification for it. Those in the Q category had the next highest perception score and with the least justification. The NR category is intermediate. The respondents in Group II don't show the perception gap characteristic of the others. They have the highest ability score, but they may have moderated their perception in recognition of their low achievement. Notice that the ability and achievement scores of the Group I-NR men may represent a combination of the first two reactions except in regard to returning the Questionnaire. The Group II-TPR men are the only ones not showing a creditability gap and may have requested their scores less out of a perceived threat to be denied but more out of reality testing. It can't be a function of the difference between the two groups because Group II-NR's represent distributions similar to those of the Group I-Q and NR distributions.

The figures at the bottom of the category columns for men show the first semester outcomes. In terms of completing the semester, they aren't much different from the women. But, in terms of grades only, the Group II-TPR men had the same outcome as that for women. And, they were the only category for men who had a realistic referent for their self-perceptions. The Academic Achievement scores show the same kind of result--for both men and women.

What does it all mean? All of the students in this study were fully accepted into the University as qualified college students. Official University statements of acceptance and orientation, whether printed or spoken, implied its confidence that the student would get through college just as he did high school, except that with his added maturity he can and should expect to do it quite by himself. Moreover, the student should feel the same way. The results of this study indicate that students do know something about their academic competence and that many of them don't feel the way the University does about it. But, many of them apparently don't feel like admitting it--not to the Counseling Department or to anyone else. Rather, without the emotional support required, they fit themselves to the University ideal and grimly hope for the best.

Universities are concerned about attrition, but they don't seem to recognize what is happening. Neither do the students. The results of this mutual misperception is carnage. The student takes no action until it is too late, as a rule. Universities are opening their doors wider. Assuming that these interpretations have some validity, we feel that something has to change and that a change would be most effective on the part of Universities. But, that is really another question.

A COMPARISON OF TEST MEANS



CATEGORY	Q	TPR	NR	TPR	NR		Q	TPR	NR	TPR	NR
N	36	85	93	54	182		23	111	90	38	149
% completing term as full time students	83	89	63	81	77		83	84	58	87	75
% less than C ave.	65	41	60	24	40		9	15	17	23	29
SVIB: ACAD. ACHIEV.	37.3	43.7	39.2	46.1	41.2		39.2	39.5	40.0	41.5	38.1

Reaction to the papers of Thomas Lynch and Robert Montaba

Lenore W. Harmon

University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee

The idea that many students are not emotionally ready or committed to going to college is an important one. It is an almost inevitable conclusion for counselors who work in urban colleges and universities. At UWM we draw a large proportion of students from the Milwaukee area. Most of them are first generation college students, live at home, work at the kinds of part-time jobs which an industrial community affords, and find their recreation and social life off campus. They are neither economically nor culturally the kind of students who "go away" to college. If the fortuitous circumstance of having a public institution of higher education in their home town had not occurred, many of them would not have become college students. It seems justified to say that some of them are not prepared for the demands of college life or committed to meeting these demands as Dr. Lynch and Dr. Montaba have suggested.

Dr. Lynch has pointed out that the more extensive our pre-enrollment program of giving information outside of counseling has become, the less counseling is utilized by students during the pre-enrollment period. He also noted that the result of a questionnaire designed to increase the entering student's understanding of his attitudes toward college and their importance, was actually to increase the students' demands for information but not for counseling, over the demands of a control group which did not receive this questionnaire.

The authors could easily have concluded at this point that most entering freshmen, at least on our campus, are not ready to enter into counseling relationships for the purpose of changing attitudes. Assuming that, they could have congratulated themselves on finding an efficient method (that is, distributing the Booklet and the Questionnaire) for dispensing information--which is all entering freshman are ready to accept.

Instead they seemed to postulate an interaction between attitudes and information which could be helpful or harmful depending on the attitudes of the individuals receiving the information. Ideally they should have studied the attitudes of students who came in for counseling interviews, contrasting them with those that did not. Unfortunately this contrast was not possible because so few requested counseling. So they had to content themselves with a study of the attitudes of students who request test information as opposed to those who do not.

It is interesting to note that the self-perceptions of women have some basis in the reality of their experience as evidenced by previous achievement. This is not necessarily true for men. The two most interesting mens' groups are 1) the Q subgroup of Group I who resisted the effect of the Questionnaire (as demonstrated by Dr. Lynch) and returned it without requesting test results, and 2) the TPR subgroup of Group II who requested test results despite the fact that they did not receive a questionnaire. It seems clear that the resistors (Group I-Q) have unrealistically high perceptions of their relatively low scholastic competence. Those whose requested test results without the added impetus of the Questionnaire (Group II-TPR) have realistic perceptions of themselves as students (in terms of their relative ability). Both of these groups contained a high proportion of men who completed the first semester, but their GPAs differ considerably, with the students with realistic self-perceptions getting better grades. The SVIB achievement scale scores for these two groups seem to be more closely related to actual achievement in college than to self-perceptions which seems to provide favorable evidence as to the subtlety of the SVIB achievement scale.

The author's hypothesis that some students enter the University in a defensive state of unreadiness seems to be supported by these data. That is, some men students (the Group I-Q) go to great lengths to avoid dissonant information in the form of test results (and probably seeing a counselor). In general, they seem to be relatively ill prepared for college work but they do not admit to feelings of inadequacy or seek any help. The authors have chosen to call this a lack of

emotional commitment to college. I think that, while there may be such a state, these data lend themselves more readily to the idea of over-emotional commitment to college which suppresses the rational-realistic approach which a student must take to be successful in his studies.

It would be interesting to know how the Group I-Q men differed in their responses to the questionnaire from the men who requested test results (Group I-TPR) I would like to ask Dr. Montaba to respond to the question of differences in questionnaire responses between the Group I subgroups.

I do have some reservations about accepting the implication that the authors made regarding the role of the University in relation to the defensive state of some students. Surely the authors cannot believe that the University is a primary cause of the observed defensiveness. The University treats women and men quite uniformly during the admission and pre-enrollment period, so the apparent sex differences in defensiveness negate the possibility that the University single-handedly causes the problem. If one is searching for causal factors it seems to me it would be more realistic to blame the pressures of the masculine role, the draft, or the socio-economic status of the student. If any one of these, or some combination of them, is the cause for the defensiveness or lack of emotional readiness for college which has been observed, one wonders just what the University can do about the problem within the pre-enrollment period.

The authors seem to assume that if only the students would appear for counseling (which the data suggests they will not do) some beneficial attitude change could be effected. Somehow I wonder if counseling interviews with these students during the pre-enrollment period would not be primarily informational for the student. Even if the attitudinal area were approached, could change be effected rapidly enough to help the students survive academically? So, given the environmental situation of today's college bound male, I'd like to ask Dr. Lynch just what he would do

a) if he could change the University's enrollment policy.

and

b) if he could somehow get the highly defensive, emotionally unprepared student into his office for pre-enrollment counseling.

I'm afraid we may be asking the University to perform miracles.

I think the primary contribution of this research is that it points out the self-defeating defensive behavior which keeps some students from realizing their potential. It does not identify causes or cures.

Reply by Thomas H. Lynch

Dr. Harmon has put it right on the line, making it clear that our presentation seems to be calling the University to change. While it is true that I feel enrollment procedures need to be changed if counseling is to be better utilized, I am not claiming special competence in educational administration. Enrollment policy is not in my hands; and I am not recommending that I or other counselors take over this responsibility. What I am hoping is that those who have this responsibility can arrive at better procedures if they take cognizance of the experience reported in our presentation. The University is a complicated institution that is providing the opportunity for many students to become educated. Poorly informed changes could certainly make things worse.

Thus, I have no solutions to offer. Having made this clear, let me offer some suggestions that might be useful in developing solutions. We need to recognize that our college student populations are vastly different from the 30's and 40's and even the 50's. But our enrollment procedures are not markedly different, that is, if you have the appropriate high school rank and/or scholastic aptitude scores you are admitted and expected to use initiative in clarifying the road ahead. The student must be mindful and adjust accordingly. If we had enrollment procedures that would place the responsibility for "mindfulness" <u>jointly</u> with the University and the student, then less damage would occur than presently. I am talking about human mindfulness, not a computer tape. I realize that this is expensive, and if the University cannot afford such personnel administration let it be admitted openly so that students will find it harder to gain a false sense that someone is taking care of them.

A second suggestion. Some students who are initially poorly prepared do catch on to University ways if they persist. However, those who take a year or two to catch on are going to get D's and F's. Once a C student gets 7 or 8 grade points behind a 2.0 average, the number game becomes defeating. Much reform is needed in our educational measurement policies and practices. Again, we are letting machines do that which, I hope, educators would never do if they were personally mindful of the situation. The "back door" of the University is shameful, much as the inner cores of urban areas are shameful. In large measure both were allowed to

develop because of mindlessness, it seems to me. This, in the University, is apparently justified on the basis that a good student would never get in the fix that those who fall out the back door have gotten into. True, but we are admitting many students who are still learning how to become students. The University seems to have a system that makes it extremely difficult to recover once the student has made a mistake. Mindlessly, the University conveys much discouragement to those students who do not make it <u>right away</u>.

Dr. Harmon's second question wonders if pre-enrollment counseling with the defensive, emotional unready, would be of any real help. I would agree that counseling is not the initial step (mindful advisory systems by the student's college-and school-administrations seem to me to be that); however, if the University is to remain as it is, counseling can be helpful with the college "nonbound". At least, within special <u>programs</u> it can be. I have been involved in special programs that have required the college nonbound to see me, and pre-enrollment contacts have been very valuable. We got to know each other <u>before</u> failure set in. This increases the <u>possibility</u> that counseling later on will be helpful. On the other hand, I would agree that pre-enrollment counseling with the emotionally unready, defensive student, without better advisory systems or not within special programs is of little value.

Finally, Dr. Harmon feels the University is being asked to perform miracles. I agree it appears this way, and I guess I'm a little dismayed when I read in the press that the University <u>promises</u> to perform these miracles. Too often I have had to talk to students when the miracle promised did not materialize. If Dr. Harmon's remark is a call for better communication about what the University presently is doing, I join her in that call. Again, I think this adds up to recommending the University be more mindful of what is going on before more promises are made.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTARY

Robert P. Montaba

The study does not identify causes or cures for the defensiveness that was found. Undoubtedly there are multiple causes. The role of the large, "open door" university was singled out because:

1. It is more accessible and its influence is more nearly a constant and better lends itself to study;
2. The university, through the nature of its organization and structure, does present different "faces" to the student; and
3. While the university does not bear the sole burden for either the cause or the cure, it is the agent we most likely can influence to change.